



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

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Better Lives Grow From Small Seedlings



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Hikoyat Rakhmonova taking care of her new plants. She was able to increase the market value of her crops through better seedling production and growing practices.

Year after year, for more than three-and-a-half decades, Hikoyat Rakhmonova planted bare root vegetable seedlings in a small family plot in rural Tajikistan. Her farming methods were little changed from those of past generations, and despite years of patient tending of her crop, Rakhmonova's harvests yielded only enough for her large family and relatives to consume. There was never a surplus to take to market and sell.

One day, Rakhmonova decided to attend a meeting that was organized as part of a Feed the Future Women Economic Empowerment project. The meeting, one of several in target districts, had the goal of engaging interested women farmers in a project to help them increase the market value of their crops through better seedling production and growing practices. Rakhmonova signed on.

The project has changed the economic trajectory of Rakhmonova's life. Along with other women, she learned to grow sturdier seedlings in plastic containers filled with a disease-free soil mixture. She learned how to construct a simple, tunnel-shaped greenhouse and how to regulate the watering, temperature and humidity in the greenhouse environment. She also learned how to transplant the seedlings into an open field. Then, she and 19 other women participated in a tour organized by the project where they learned how commercial farmers in northern Tajikistan used containerized seedlings to produce vegetables on a larger scale for market.

Today, in her home-built greenhouse, she produces 10,000 high-quality tomato seedlings, half of which she plants on her own plot. She is able to sell the remaining 5,000 to her neighbors and to other farmers, generating profits of around 3,500 somoni (\$350). Since times are tough, she is allowing her neighbors to pay when they are able. Even so, for the first time in her farming career, she now is generating income from produce sales and contributing to her family's well-being.